## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION CHECKLIST

**Project:** CVPIA Sacramento River Spawning Gravel Addition Project at Salt Creek

**Date:** June 26, 2009

**Nature of Action:** Place approximately 9,000-10,000 tons of spawning gravel in the Sacramento River, at the Salt Creek site, between August 31, 2009 and September 25, 2009.

**Exclusion category:** Bureau of Reclamation Categorical Exclusion - 516 DM 6 Appendix 9 C. Project Implementation Activities, 3. Minor construction activities associated with authorized projects which correct unsatisfactory environmental conditions or which merely augment or supplement, or are enclosed within existing facilities.

### Evaluation of Criteria for Categorical Exclusion

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | This action or group of actions would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. | No ✓ Uncertain ___ Yes ___ |
| 2. | This action or group of actions would involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. | No ✓ Uncertain ___ Yes ___ |

### Evaluation of Exceptions to Actions within Categorical Exclusion

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety. | No ✓ Uncertain ___ Yes ___ |
| 2. | This action would have significant impacts on natural resources and unique geographic characteristics such as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wetlands, wild or scenic rivers, rivers placed on the nationwide river inventory, floodplains, national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; migratory birds; prime or unique farmlands; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. (Same as appendix 516-DM-2, appendix 2 part 2.2). | No ✓ Uncertain ___ Yes ___ |
| 3. | This action will have highly controversial environmental effects. | No ✓ Uncertain ___ Yes ___ |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4. | This action will have highly uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risk. | No_✓_Uncertain___Yes___ |
| 5. | This action will establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. | No_✓_Uncertain__Yes___ |
| 6. | This action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant environmental effects. | No_✓_Uncertain___Yes____ |
| 7. | This action will significantly affect on properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historical Places. | No_✓_Uncertain___Yes___ |
| 8. | This action will significantly affect a species listed or proposed to be listed as endangered or threatened, or Critical Habitat for these species. | No_✓_Uncertain___Yes____ |
| 9. | This action threatens to violate Federal, state, local, executive or Secretarial orders, or tribal law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. | No_✓_Uncertain__ Yes___ |
| 10. | This action will affect Indian Trust Assets. | No_✓_Uncertain___Yes___ |
| 11. | This action will limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly aversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. | No_✓_Uncertain___Yes___ |
| 12. | This action will have a disproportionately high and adverse affect minority or low-income populations. | No_✓_Uncertain___Yes___ |
| 13. | This action will contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth , or expansion of the range of such species. | No_✓_Uncertain___Yes___ |

**NEPA Action-** Categorical Exclusion: x
EA
EIS

**Environmental commitments, explanation, and/or remarks:**

The proposed project would place approximately 9,000-10,000 tons of clean/washed spawning gravel into the Sacramento River, at the Salt Creek injection site (see attached Figure 1), between August 31, 2009 and September 25, 2009.

Gravel would be placed onto the river bank and then slowly pushed into the river, using a rubber-tired front-end loader, to form a raised gravel delta extending about one-half of the way across the wetted channel, and about 250 feet long (see attached Figure 2). During periods of high releases, the gravel would be mobilized downstream and deposited to form spawning riffles. Spawning gravel has been added to the Salt Creek site seven times since 1997 with a total of 95,650 tons added. Monitoring has shown that gravel added and transported downstream is being used by spawning winter-run Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and steelhead (*O. mykiss)*.

Spawning gravel used in the proposed project would have the following size criteria:

| Particle Size | Percent Passing | Percent Retained |
|---|---|---|
| 5" | 95-100 | 0-5 |
| 2" | 75-85 | 15-30 |
| 1" | 40-50 | 50-60 |
| 3/4" | 25-35 | 60-75 |
| 1/2" | 10-20 | 85-90 |
| 1/4" | 0-5 | 95-100 |

Gravel would be uncrushed, rounded, natural river rock, with no sharp edges. It would be washed at least once and have a cleanliness value of 85 or higher based on CalTrans Test No. 227. Gravel would also be completely free of oils, clay, debris, and organic material. Acceptable gravel sources include deposits outside active stream channels, in high terraces, and from alluvial fans of tributary streams in the upper reaches of CVP reservoirs. Gravel sources near perennial streams would be extracted from outside the 100-year floodplain such that future impacts to salmon or steelhead habitat will not occur.

Other permits obtained for the project include a National Marine Fisheries Service Section 7 consultation, Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit number 27, and a California Regional Water Quality Control Board Section 401 Permit.

Preparer:

James De Stasio III — 6/26/09

Fishery Biologist — Date

Concurrence with Item 7:

See Attached

Regional Archeologist — Date

Concurrence with Item 10 and 11:

See Attached

ITA Designee — Date

Concurrence:

[signature] — 6/30/09

Northern California Area NEPA Coordinator — Date

Concurrence:

[signature] — 6-30-09

Environmental and Natural Resources Division Chief — Date

Approval:

[signature] — July 1, 2009

Northern California Area Manager — Date

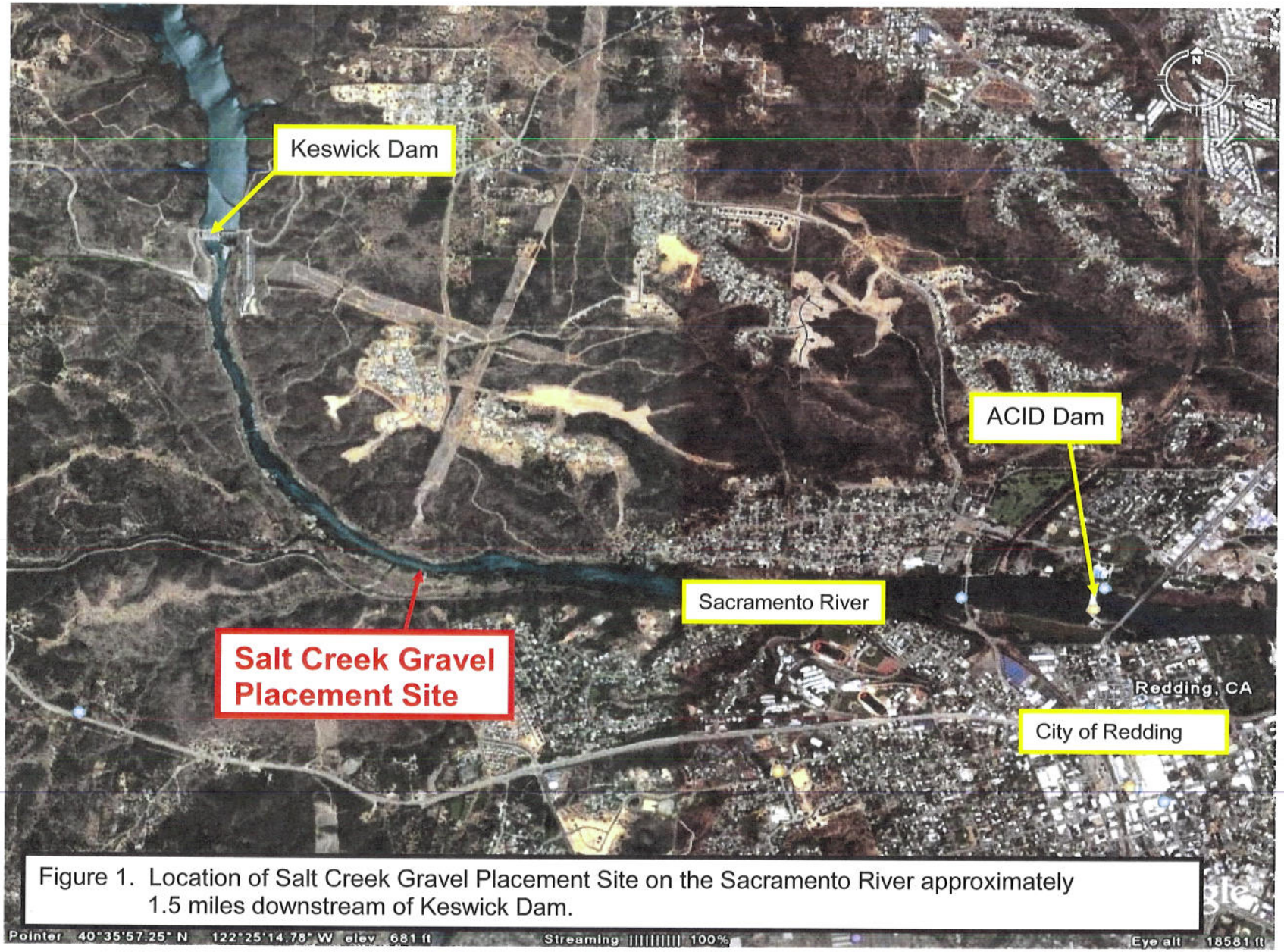


Figure 1. Location of Salt Creek Gravel Placement Site on the Sacramento River approximately 1.5 miles downstream of Keswick Dam.


Figure 2. Salt Creek Gravel Placement Site showing extent of gravel placement in the Sacramento River.

## Regional Archeologist Concurrence

**>> Jim West 01/16/04 01:54PM >>>**

The proposed gravel injection at Keswick Dam and Salt Creek will have no effect on historic properties. A records check of our files indicates that there are no previously recorded archeological sites in the Area of Potential Effect.

No Indian Trust Assets will be affected.

Exclusion category: 516 DM 9.C.3

Please place a copy of this concurrence with the CEC.

(Thanks for including the excellent air photos with the locations mapped.)

G. James West
Regional Archeologist
Bureau of Reclamation- Mid Pacific Region
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 978-5041
FAX (916) 978-5055

## ITA Concurrence

**From:** Frank Perniciaro
**To:** DeStaso, James
**Date:** 27-Jan-2005 3:33:47 PM
**Subject:** Re: ITA Review - Sacramento River Gravel

Hi Jim,

You're good to go on ITAs -- thanks for the chance to review.

FINDING: This Reclamation project is being implemented under Section 3406 (b)(13) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act . The project calls for spawning gravel additions to the upper Sacramento River to mitigate for negative impacts to anadromous fish habitat resulting from the construction Shasta and Keswick Dams. This action does not affect Indian trust assets and therefore I concur with the finding in Item 10 of the CVPIA Sacramento River Spawning Gravel Addition Project at Keswick Dam and Salt Creek CEC, by NCAO, dated January 26, 2005.

NATURE OF ACTION: The proposed project is being conducted under Section 3406 (b)(13) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act. This Section mandates spawning gravel additions to the upper Sacramento River to mitigate for negative impacts to anadromous fish habitat resulting from the construction Shasta and Keswick Dams. The project will place approximately 8000 tons of spawning gravel in the Sacramento River at two locations: 1) 4000 tons placed at the Keswick Dam injection site; and 2) 4000 tons placed at the Salt Creek site.

The proposed project will improve both the quantity and quality of spawning habitat for anadromous fish. No direct or indirect adverse impacts to the environment are expected. This project has been implemented five times over the past seven years, and this year's injection will be identical to all previous years.

At the Salt Creek site, gravel will be placed onto the riverbank and a rubber-tired front-end loader will push gravel into the river forming a fan shaped raised terrace above the water line. The terrace will not exceed one-half the width of the wetted channel. No equipment will enter the wetted river channel. At the Keswick Dam site, gravel will be end-dumped from a 100-foot high terrace. Injected gravel will remain on the terrace until mobilized by high winter flows. Gravel will only encroach into the wetted river channel approximately 25 feet, with the majority being retained above the water surface.

Other permits being obtained for the project include: NOAA Fisheries Section 7 consultation, Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit number 27, City of Redding Encroachment Permit, Regional Water Quality Control Board Section 401 Permit, State Lands Commission Use Permit; and right-of-way permission from a private landowners.

LOCATION: 1 mile downstream of Keswick Dam and at the entry point of Salt Creek into the Sacramento River. Salt Creek site is 40° 35' 42.94" N, 122° 26' 10.71" W, and the Keswick Dam site is 40° 36' 00.95" N, 122° 26' 42.58" W.

SCHEDULE: The action is planned between August 29, 2005 and September 30, 2005.

PROJECT PROPONENT: Bureau of Reclamation

INDIAN TRUST ASSET ANALYSIS: The proposed action will place approximately 8000 tons of spawning gravel into the Sacramento River, 4000 tons placed at the Salt Creek site, under the provisions of Section 3406 (b)(13) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act. There are no foreseeable impacts to ITAs as a result of this action. There are no ITAs in the project areas. No downstream tribes have federally reserved fishing rights on the Sacramento River, however, even if this was the case, the project is a benefit to anadromous fish. I concur with the finding in Item 10 of the CEC for the CVPIA Sacramento River Spawning Gravel Addition Project at Keswick Dam and Salt Creek, developed by NCAO, dated January 26, 2005. The

nearest Indian trust assets (held in trust for the Redding Rancheria) are located approximately 8 air miles south of the proposed action.

DEFINITION of INDIAN TRUST ASSETS: The United States has a trust responsibility to protect and maintain rights reserved by, or granted to, federally recognized tribes and individual Indians, by treaties, statutes, and executive orders. These rights are sometimes further interpreted through court decisions and regulations. The trust responsibility requires that all federal agencies, including Reclamation, take all actions reasonably necessary to protect Indian trust assets (Reclamation 1994).

Indian Trust Assets are legal interests in property held in trust by the federal government for federally recognized Indian tribes or individual Indians. "Assets" are anything owned that has monetary value. "Legal interest" means there is a property interest for which there is a legal remedy, such as compensation or injunction, if there is improper interference. Indian trust assets do not include things in which a tribe or individual Indians have no legal interest (Reclamation 1994).

Indian Trust Assets can be real property, physical assets or intangible property rights, such as a lease, or a right to use something. Indian Trust Assets cannot be sold, leased, or otherwise alienated without United States' approval. While most Indian trust assets are located on-reservation, they can also be located off-reservation. Examples of things that can be Indian Trust Assets are land, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, water rights, and instream flows. Off-reservation cultural resources located on non-trust land, are usually not Indian trust assets (Reclamation 1994).

Frank Perniciaro
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>>> James DeStaso 1/26/2005 1:46:58 PM >>>
Frank,

I wanted to get an ITA review from you for the work described in the attached CEC. In a nutshell, Reclamation expects to place clean spawning gravel into the Sacramento River at two locations, Keswick Dam and Salt Creek. Both of these sites have received gravel additions multiple times over the past eight years. The Keswick Site injects gravel immediately at the Keswick Office Building parking lot. The Salt Creek Site, about one mile downstream from Keswick Dam, uses already existing roads to access the site. The only disturbance at either location will be vehicular/truck traffic; the landscape will not be disturbed except for tire tracks.

Thanks for your help and if you have any questions please give me a call.

Regards,
Jim

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Jim De Staso
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Northern California Area Office
16349 Shasta Dam Blvd.
Shasta Lake, CA 96019
Phone: 530-276-2046
Fax: 530-275-2441
Email: jdestaso@mp.usbr.gov

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**National Marine Fisheries Service Not Likely To Adversely Affect Concurrence**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Region
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213



JAN 23 2009

In response refer to:
2008/08339

Mr. James De Staso III
Bureau of Reclamation
Northern California Area Office
16349 Shasta Dam Boulevard
Shasta Lake, California 96019-8400

Dear Mr. De Staso:

This is in response to your letter of December 29, 2008, requesting NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) concurrence that the proposed Salt Creek Spawning Gravel Placement project on the Sacramento River near Redding, California, is not likely to adversely affect Federally listed endangered winter-run Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* ), threatened spring-run Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), threatened Central Valley steelhead (*O. mykiss)*, threatened Southern Distinct Population Segment of North American green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), and their respective designated and proposed critical habitats.

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) plans on placing approximately 9,000 tons of clean spawning gravel into the Sacramento River at Salt Creek approximately 1.5 miles downstream of Keswick Dam between August 31 and September 25, 2009. The objective of the proposed project is to restore salmonid spawning habitat lost due to the construction of Shasta Dam. Implementation of the proposed project meets requirements of the Central Valley Project (CVP) Improvement Act, Section 3406(b)(13), and the NMFS 2004 biological opinion concerning Long-term Operations, Criteria and Plan for the CVP and State Water Project. Spawning gravel has been added to the Salt Creek site eight times since 1997, for a total of 103,950 tons added. Past additions have been successfully mobilized by high river flows and deposited downstream to form active spawning riffles. Past monitoring has shown that gravel augmentation has been transported downstream and utilized for spawning by winter-run Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead.

Gravel will be placed on the west bank of the Sacramento River and slowly pushed into the river using a rubber-tired front-end loader. A raised gravel delta is expected to encroach into the wetted river channel approximately 250 feet long and one-half way across the channel, with the majority remaining on the pile above the water surface. During periods of high releases from Shasta Dam, the gravel will be mobilized downstream and deposited in spawning areas. Gravel will be collected from deposits that are outside active stream channels which would not have naturally contributed to the river and will be of a size and shape considered to be optimal for successful salmonid spawning.

The following measures designed to minimize adverse impacts to the riverine ecosystem have been incorporated into the proposed project work plan:

1. The fall time frame was selected in coordination with NMFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game as the period of lowest potential impacts to salmonids. It allows the addition of materials at the tail end of winter-run fry emergence and the beginning of fall-run adult spawning in the area.

2. The project location is in an area of the Sacramento River that has a bedrock streambed, therefore no redds would be present or impacted.

3. The gravel will be washed at least once and have a cleanliness value of 85 or higher, based on Caltrans Test #227, to minimize the introduction of fine sediments into the river. Gravel will also be completely free of oils, clay, debris, and organic material.

4. Gravel used in this project will be uncrushed, rounded "natural river rock" with no sharp edges. Gravel will have the following size requirements: 95-100 percent passing through a 5-inch sieve; 75-85 percent passing through a 2-inch sieve; 40-50 percent passing through a 1-inch sieve; 25-35 percent passing through a ¾-inch sieve; 10-20 percent passing through a ½-inch sieve; and 0-5 percent passing through a ¼-inch sieve.

ESA Section 7 Consultation

Based on our review of the proposed project and the best scientific and commercial information currently available, and provided that the above-listed conservation measures are strictly adhered to, NMFS concurs with your determination that the proposed Salt Creek Gravel Placement project is not likely to adversely affect listed salmonids or their critical habitat. The potential for adverse effects is discountable and not expected to reach the level where take will occur for the following reasons: (1) the time frame avoiding juvenile Chinook and steelhead incubation and emergence; (2) the use of in-river flows to slowly distribute gravels instead of heavy equipment; (3) the use of washed gravel to avoid turbidity and sediments entering the river; and (4) the use of rounded river rock of the size preferred by spawning salmonids. Designated and proposed critical habitat which includes the riparian areas along the bank would not be adversely impacted since the same site as previous years is being used (*i.e.*, project site is devoid of vegetation at end of road). NMFS also concurs that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect green sturgeon due to the short time frame, August 31 through September 25, which avoids the spring spawning period. The slow manner of gravel placement (*i.e.*, months to years for gravel to distribute downstream) allows juveniles and adults time to avoid the area of disturbance. This concludes section 7 consultation for the proposed project; however, should new information indicate that the project may affect listed species in an unforeseen manner, or if the contractor cannot complete work in the manner proposed or within the specified time frames, further consultation may be necessary.

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Consultation (FWCA)

The proposed project area has been identified as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for all races of Central Valley Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) including the fall/late fall-run in Amendment 14 of the Pacific Salmon Fishery Management Plan pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Federal action agencies are mandated by the MSA (Section 305[b][2]) to consult with NMFS on all actions that may adversely affect EFH, and NMFS must provide EFH conservation recommendations back to those agencies (Section 305[b][4][A]). Because the proposed action includes conservation measures designed to avoid impacts to salmonid habitat, and is in fact designed to enhance and increase spawning habitat in the Sacramento River, NMFS concurs with Reclamation that the proposed action would not adversely affect EFH. Therefore, EFH Conservation Recommendations are not required at this time; however, if there is a substantial revision to the action, the lead Federal agency will need to initiate EFH consultation.

The purpose of the FWCA is to ensure that wildlife conservation receives equal consideration, and is coordinated with other aspects of water resources development [16 U.S.C. 661]. The FWCA establishes a consultation requirement for Federal departments and agencies that undertake any action that proposes to modify any stream or other body of water for any purpose, including navigation and drainage [16 U.S.C 662(a)]. The FWCA allows the opportunity to offer recommendations for the conservation of species and habitats beyond those currently managed under the ESA and MSA. Because the proposed project is designed to minimize impacts to aquatic habitats and to improve spawning habitat conditions for aquatic species, NMFS has no additional FWCA comments to provide.

Please contact Ms. Naseem Alston at (916) 930-3655, or via e-mail at naseem.alston@noaa.gov, if you have any questions concerning this correspondence or require additional information.

Sincerely,

for Rodney R. McInnis
Regional Administrator

cc: Copy to file – AR# 151422SWR2003SA8809
Copy to file - AR# 151422SWR2006SA00076
NMFS-PRD, Long Beach, CA
Bryant Chesney, Long Beach, California
Mr. Jim Smith, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 10950 Tyler Road, Red Bluff, CA 96080
Ms. Tricia Bratcher, California Department of Fish and Game, 601 Locust St., Redding, CA 96001
Mr. Matt Rabbe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 152 Hartnell Avenue, Redding, CA 96002